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# JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

JAMES MONROE CROMER



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James M. Crooner

# Jeptha's Daughter

*A Drama in Five Acts*

By

James Monroe Cromer, D.D.



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TO  
HER  
WHOSE  
SIMPLE YOUNG LIFE  
AND CHARACTER WERE MUCH LIKE  
THE HEROINE OF THIS LITTLE BOOK, AND  
TO WHOM THE AUTHOR OWES SO MUCH FOR  
THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL TREND OF  
HIS LIFE, AND WHO AT THE RIPE  
AGE OF EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS  
STILL LIVES

“MY MOTHER”

THIS LITTLE  
BOOK IS DEDICATED



## PREFACE

No portion of the Old Testament scriptures has had more charms for the author than this little story in which Jephtha's daughter is the heroine. The dramatic form in which it appears is intended to make it more real and impressive. It also suggests possibilities for presenting on the stage, furnishing ample scope for the very best talent. Since the moving picture shows have monopolized the melodramatic, with its sensational and agonizing situations of romance and adventure, there would seem to be place for plays of the higher moral and spiritual order found in this work.

But the book is sent forth for the use and interest of the common reader, which it is hoped its form will the more easily secure. Especially should the young be inspired by the lofty sentiments and ideals embodied in the character of Jephtha's daughter.

It is with the consciousness that its perusal must do good that it is sent forth with the prayer that the blessings of the God of Jephtha's daughter may attend all who may read it.



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## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER  
JEPHTHA  
THE SHEPHERD CAPTAIN  
HAZAEI AND SOLDIERS  
ELDERS OF GILEAD  
JEPHTHA'S BRETHREN  
KING OF AMMONITES  
AMBASSADORS  
EPHRAIMITE  
VIRGINS  
MESSENGERS  
PRIEST  
CHORUS



# JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

## OPENING CHORUS

*Curtain rises on full chorus and all parts*

O the land of Gilead,  
Land of promise from our God,  
Land of rivers, hills and dales,  
Land by generations trod,  
Come we now to sing of Thee—  
Verdant land beside the sea.  
Fertile vales of Ajalon,  
Bright with nature's golden crown.

O the land of Gilead,  
Land of sorrow, land of war.  
Elah's vales are red with blood,  
Shed by foes from near and far,  
Burdened by long slavery,  
Gone is all our liberty,  
Hear, O God, our cry to Thee,  
Send some hand to set us free.

## OPENING CHORUS

Stricken land of Gilead,  
    Rent by factions sore and deep,  
Threaten'd by internal strife;  
    Thou, O God, Thy vigil keep,  
Heal the broken friendship's ties,  
Stay the tears of pleading eyes,  
Blight the seed of Ammon's hate,  
In Thy hands we yield our fate, Amen.  
*Chorus Recedes, Second Curtain Drops,*  
    *Leaving Characters for Act One*  
        *on Stage*

## ACT ONE

### THE ESTRANGEMENT

#### SCENE FIRST

*Characters: Jephtha's Daughter and the  
Young Captain*

*(Jephtha's Daughter at well with pitcher  
filled with water. Young Captain comes  
with sheep. She veils face. Captain ap-  
proaches, saluting.)*

CAPTAIN.

Thou daughter fair, of Gilead, I  
    pray  
Thee, give me drink.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

    The wells our fathers dug  
Are deep, and thou hast nought with  
    which to draw.

*(She lifts pitcher, he takes and  
drinks, sheep appear behind  
fence.)*

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Thy flocks are thirsty, too, I'll give  
them drink.

*(She draws water. He prevents.)*

CAPTAIN.

But stay thy hand, kind maid, I'll  
draw for thee.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

But who art thou whom God has sent  
to show

This token of good will?

CAPTAIN.

I'm captain of  
The royal guards who watch against  
the foe,  
And keep my father's flocks in times  
of peace.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

That wast my father's bodyguard?

CAPTAIN.

Who is  
Thy father, child?

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

The judge of Gilead.

CAPTAIN.

The chief, whose skill and spirit,  
bold, so long  
Defended us against our enemies?

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

Yea, even he, who, banish'd from his  
home,  
Now roams an exile in the land of  
Tob.

CAPTAIN.

The shame of Gilead, nor shall we  
gain  
Our liberties till he return to lead.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

Thou speakest well, my lord, God  
speed the day  
When he shall be aveng'd of all his  
wrongs,—

CAPTAIN.

And when by his command our  
armies shall  
Be sent against the foe, and Gilead  
Again be free.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

May God, Jehovah, grant  
It true, that I my father soon shall  
see.

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Farewell, kind friend, farewell. May  
God thee keep.

*(She turns to go. Captain restrains  
her and offers her token of his  
love.)*

CAPTAIN.

Fair daughter, thou of Israel's seed,  
accept

This humble gift,—the token of my  
love.

*(He puts bracelet on her arm.  
Kisses her hand.)*

The lustre of thine eye hath pierced  
my heart,

And open'd up the fountains of my  
soul.

*(She bows and turns to go.)*

Fair maid, thou gift of God, fare-  
well, farewell.

## SECOND SCENE

*(Land of Tob. Hazael, King of Damas-  
cus. Jephtha, Judge of Gilead. Hazael's  
Band)*

HAZAEI.

Ah, by the beard of Moloch, Judah  
land

Is glorious. On mountain peaks the  
oaks  
Majestic stand, and verdant fields,  
all fleck'd  
With bleating flocks and lowing  
herds, do make  
Of Bashan such a land that Israel's  
seers  
By right were mov'd by inspiration  
giv'n.

JEPHTHA.

It is the land of promise, which our  
God  
Jehovah gave His bondage seed for  
home  
And worship true.

HAZAEI.

The gift is worthy of  
A god. For age on age has past and  
gone,  
And nations, too,—in pageant grand  
(all bright  
With glory, each its own), in turn  
have fill'd  
These fertile plains with cities,—  
built by art  
Divine, upon the banks of silv'ry  
streams,—

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

And pass'd away, like moving shadows, to  
Oblivion. All, all has chang'd, except  
Those tow'ring oaks,—the pride of  
Bashan's hills.

JEPHTHA.

Ah yes, Hazael, sparkling Jabbok,  
like  
A jewell'd necklace, set with rarest  
gems,  
Adorns the bosom of these fertile  
plains.  
But only as a phantom does it rise  
Before my eyes, creating little else  
Than admiration. For, my heart,  
so sick  
For Gilead, remains untouch'd by all  
This loveliness.

HAZAEI.

I hope that Jephtha's heart  
Is not so wed to native land that it  
Is blind to all the beauty God has  
giv'n  
To this His chosen clime.  
But tell what charms  
In Gilead, my lord, that you so cling  
To it. Your kindred, you have said,  
have thrust



# ACT ONE

19

You from your father's house, and  
     you have turn'd  
 Your back on Gilead, to seek a home  
 Congenial to your finer sense.

JEPHTHA.

My poor  
 Old father yet remains, and loves  
     me still,  
 I'm sure, in spite of all. Sometimes  
     my heart  
 Reproaches me for leaving him  
     among  
 Unruly sons. His lot my heart would  
     share.

HAZAEEL.

Faint hearts condemn themselves.  
     Think not of him,  
 My Jephtha, for he dealt with you in  
     such  
 Unkindness,—standing by with no  
     concern,  
 While you, his son, were robb'd by  
     foulest plot  
 Of all your patrimony's share, by  
     those  
 Who spent it all in rioting, and did  
 Not lift his hand in your defense.  
     And you

So fam'd for worth and ev'ry manly  
grace!

JEPHTHA.

He's old and powerless, Hazael,  
and I

Am not his lawful son, but child of  
her

His fav'rite concubine. With her I  
shar'd

His love, e'en when he took a wife  
and was

Again a sire. But soon his wife  
look'd on

My mother and her son with envious  
eyes.

She taught her sons to hate, who  
sought by arts

Of all device to wean my father from  
His love for me, and drive me from  
his house.

*(Covers his face in grief.)*

I did not ask their love, and did not  
know

What sorrow was until my mother  
died,

And then I suffer'd double hate from  
all.

*(Again covers his head in grief.)*

By manly sports, and in defense  
against

# ACT ONE

21

Our enemies, I sought to gain their  
love.

But fame acquired thus increas'd their  
hate

Until they caus'd my father, invalid,  
To rob me of my heritage, and drive  
Me from his door. And yet I love  
him still.

HAZAEL.

For shame, dear Jephtha, had you  
not some friend  
To plead your cause?

JEPHTHA.

Nay, none of ample pow'r  
To break the phalanx strong of those  
who stood  
The closest in my father's confidence.

HAZAEL.

Had I been you, I'd call'd the elders  
of  
The town and forc'd your brethren to  
give up  
Your share in the estate.

JEPHTHA.

And that is what  
I did, and which affects me most, for  
they

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Refus'd and wrought the deeper injury.  
Though faithful I to them in keeping off  
Invading tribes, and raising high the fame  
Of Gilead, they would not grant my rights.

HAZAEL.

And think you not that they were  
purchas'd by  
Your father's gold?

JEPHTHA.

From father so infirm,  
And brothers envious I little hop'd,  
But from my country I did not expect  
Such base ingratitude. So deeply did  
I feel this shaft of enmity, I shook  
The dust from off my feet against  
them all,  
And left them, vowing never to return.

HAZAEL.

A brave resolve, my noble Jephtha;  
come  
And think no more of such false  
friends, and turn  
To those who now with open arms  
do wait

To welcome you. But trust yourself  
to my  
Advice, and, by old Baal, the coun-  
trymen  
Of Gilead shall rue the day they  
drove  
You from their land.

JEPHTHA.

Be gentle, kind Haza'l,  
It breaks my heart to hear you an-  
swer thus.  
Before I join your band, I must exact  
Agreement that I ne'er be ask'd to  
slay  
My countrymen. Against the wily  
foes  
Of Canaanites and Ammonites I'll  
go  
With all my strength, but not the  
people of  
My native land. Altho' they've sorely  
hurt  
And injur'd me, I'll never lift my  
arm  
To do them harm. I'm yours, if you  
accept  
Me thus. I cannot turn against my  
own.

HAZAEEL.

Your wishes I shall surely heed. We  
are

Too proud to have the noble Jephtha  
in

Our ranks to fail in anything he may  
Demand. But follow me, kind sir,  
our friends

Are waiting in the cave below the hill,  
And you shall find a welcome suited to  
Your worth, and scope for all your  
bravery.

*(Jephtha shudders at the thought of  
joining an alien band, and hesi-  
tates.)*

I read your inner strife. But we are  
not

A horde of bandits, bent on robbery.  
Like you, we're men of rank who've  
felt rebuff

From this cold world and have with-  
drawn to pass

Our time in deeds of arms and rev-  
elry.

For I'm related to the princess proud  
Of Napthali, and am reluctant as  
Yourself to sully my good name by  
deeds

Of rapine and of violence. Come on,

My Jephtha, friend, to our retreat,  
and learn  
The fellowship of royal noblemen.

*(They reach the cave and are re-  
ceiv'd with shouts.)*

SOLDIERS (Hazeal's Band).

Huzza, huzza, our king and Jephtha,  
judge  
Of Gilead! Huzza! Let all the  
gods  
Of Ashteroth rejoice. Huzza, huzza.

HAZAEEL.

Now enter, lordly Jephtha, and enjoy  
The true abode of happiness. Forget  
Th' ungrateful land you left behind  
and let  
Your soul find peace and joy among  
our band  
Of ardent patriots. Huzza! huzza!

*(All join in huzzas as curtain  
falls.)*

## ACT TWO

### THE REPENTANCE

(*Characters: Hazael, Jephtha, Elders,—  
Jephtha's Brethren.*)

(*They prepare a feast. Jephtha  
looks sadly out of the cave.  
Hazael notices it.*)

HAZAEI.

What thinkest thou of thy new friends  
and their

Attempt to welcome thee? Their  
friendship's true.

(*Jephtha only looks sad. No an-  
swer.*)

Art tir'd so soon of banqueting? The  
lord

Of Canaan was an expert judge of  
wine.

His season'd wares are good as Hel-  
bon's brand.

(*Pauses. Jephtha still downcast.  
Hazael continues pouring wine.*)



Why thus so sad, my captain brave?  
 Dost think  
 Of Gilead? and pine for those best  
 known  
 For treachery? Your gloom is  
 worthy of  
 A nobler cause than unrequited love.

JEPHTHA.

Hazael, all the years I've spent in  
 true  
 Devotion to my native land arise  
 Before my mind and dull my sense of  
 due  
 Appreciation, and I think of home.

HAZAEI.

THOU HAST NO HOME! Expatriated  
 by  
 The envy of unworthy kin, and those  
 Who rivall'd thee for honors on the  
 field,  
 Thou wert an exile in a foreign land.

JEPHTHA.

'Tis true, but still the blood of loyalty  
 Cannot so quickly cool. My heart  
 still warms  
 For those with whom my youthful  
 days were spent.

HAZAEI.

No obligation known to human code  
Can hold against the deeds of traitor  
hands.

JEPHTHA.

And thus I've tried to wean my heart  
away  
From childhood's bonds. But some-  
thing deep within  
Reproaches me for haste in breaking  
off  
A life-long fellowship, refusing to  
Defend my native land against the  
sword  
Of heartless enemies. I would re-  
turn  
And lead my people out against the  
foe.

*(Hazeal sets down the cup out of  
which he had been pouring wine,  
and frowns at Jephtha.)*

HAZAEI.

Ingratitude, it seems, is common trait  
In Gilead. When robb'd and driven  
from  
Thy childhood home, I took thee with  
the heart  
And ardor of a friend, and gave thee  
place

Of confidence, in captaincy of all  
My troops, and thou without return  
    hast spurn'd  
It all. Hast thou at all considered  
    this?

JEPHTHA.

Do not so hotly speak to one so sad.  
I've not resolv'd to go. My conscience, soft,  
Has kept reproaching me. It whispers in  
My heart the truth long learn'd,—  
    For evil, good  
To give. And should I listen to its  
    voice,  
I know that God would give me victory  
Against the foes who dare to waste  
    our land.

HAZAEEL.

Believe me, Jephtha, no such jeopardy  
Confronts your native land. Your  
    kindred have  
Devis'd a plot to lure you to their  
    camp  
To take your life. Their coward  
    souls, afire  
With hate, lose all repose while  
    Jephtha lives.

JEPHTHA.

It may be so. A tender conscience  
oft  
May play one false and lead where  
judgment would  
Refuse to go. I'll banish these re-  
grets,  
Renew my vows of loyalty to thee,  
My friend, and try to compensate  
for all  
The kindness lavish'd on my humble  
self.

*(Jeptha looks out and speaks ex-  
citedly.)*

Behold, Haza'l, what kind of men are  
those

Who come through yonder plain?

*(Hazeael turns and looks.)*

HAZAEEL.

A company  
Is heading tow'rd the tower,—they've  
pass'd the lake.

*(Pauses,—both looking.)*

And now they near the summit of the  
hill.

*(Jeptha recognizes, turns sadly,  
covers with mantle.)*

HAZAEEL.

I now can see. The rulers come from  
out

Of Gilead, bedeck'd in purple robes!  
 What brings them here? Their city  
     must be set  
 Upon by enemies.

*(Turning to Jephtha.)*

They're seeking aid  
 From thee they so despis'd! What  
     quick remorse!

*(Jephtha assumes form of pray'r.)*

JEPHTHA.

O God, my fathers, and my native  
     land!

*(Both look again.)*

HAZAEEL.

But see, the elders, too, in camel  
     train

And stately equipage, do follow them!  
 Some pending doom must threaten  
     Gilead

To drive these men, so frail with age,  
     from home

On such a dang'rous task. Does  
     Jephtha see?

*(Jephtha now recognizes his wicked  
 brethren.)*

JEPHTHA.

They are my wicked brethren, come  
     to call

Me back to lead their troops. THE  
     DASTARD SOULS!!

How dare they face the man on whom  
they dealt

Such injury? Perfidious treachery!!

*(Jephtha proudly stands with  
Hazeal. Company approaches,  
saluting. Elder speaks.)*

ELDER.

My noble Jephtha, since you heeded  
not

Our messengers, we've come ourselves  
to seek

Your aid against the Ammonites, who  
press

Us sore, and dare to take our land  
and make

Us slaves. These elders of your city,  
here,

And these, your father's sons, have  
ventur'd all

This pilgrimage to gain your royal  
aid.

JEPHTHA.

For men of such ripe years, your  
minds have chang'd

With sudden haste. How short the  
time since ye

Did drive me from your doors, and  
now ye come

To win me back! My heart resents  
your plea.

ELDER.

Our need indeed is great, and though  
we were  
Too proud to follow Jephtha then, our  
God  
Has scourg'd us sore, and made us  
penitent.

JEPHTHA.

It was my pleasure, once, and highest  
joy  
To serve you all, defending native  
land.  
But you were jealous of my pow'r,  
and drove  
Me hence, and now in your distress  
you pray  
Me to return. Such motive I dis-  
dain.

ELDER.

But see our need. Do not our suit  
deny.  
Reject us not. Our armies call you  
to  
Their head in full command. No man  
in all  
Our ranks can lead them to success.  
Your name,  
Resounding at our walls, would rally  
all,

And terror strike to all our foes, and  
make  
Old Gilead free. Such honor comes  
to few.

JEPHTHA.

Of this you should have thought be-  
fore, but now,—  
(*Jeptha turns from them with re-  
fusing gesture.*)

ELDER.

Turn not away. Wouldst thou be-  
hold thy home  
Laid waste by enemies, thy country-  
men  
Made slaves, and lovely Gil'ad be no  
more?  
(*Jeptha, in much anger.*)

JEPHTHA.

What home, what countrymen and kin  
have I?  
(*Brothers advance, offering sword  
and gold.*)

ELDER.

Behold thy brethren here, repentant  
deep  
For all their wrongs, who yield their  
gold,—their all,  
And offer thee their sword, insignia  
Of pow'r! Thy frozen heart must  
surely melt.



*(Jeptha turns away, motioning them back.)*

JEPHTHA.

Nay, nay, do not allow them here,—  
these men

Who sought my life, disowning me,  
and robb'd

Me of my heritage. I cannot see  
Their face. Humiliation and re-  
proach

And perfidy for years, would bar my  
heart

Against their plea. Let them at once  
be gone.

*(Silence. Young men hesitate. Jeptha assumes attitude of pray'r. Young men turn pleadingly.)*

And yet as worshipper of God, the  
Just,

Who taught me to forgive, I hesitate.

*(Young men advance, bow to welcome Jeptha.)*

I would not add the greater crime of  
death

And bondage to my countrymen.

Two wrongs

Do not make right. I cannot square  
accounts

By doing greater wrong. My heart  
relents.

*(Young men renew offer of gold.)*

But not your gold, nor sword have  
chang'd my mind.

I honor God, who rules my heart, and  
put

This kindness there, and taught me to  
forgive.

*(Jeptha hesitates, then speaks.)*

Young men, return, I now forgive.

Ye are

My father's sons. But stay not here  
if ye

Wish Gil'ad well. Withdraw to yon-  
der cave

Among my friends, and, too, be on  
your guard.

*(Jeptha waves them away.)*

ELDER.

You do not mean our friendship to  
betray?

We thought your heart of nobler cast  
than thus

To harbor base revenge, appearing to  
Be kind. You then reject our plea,  
and send

Us to be slaves as our reward for  
all

Our penitence and deep humility?

JEPHTHA.

My heart divides between myself and  
thee.

*(Hazeal frowns at Jephtha.)*

ELDER.

If home and native land, and father  
bow'd

With years, do not affect, perhaps  
thou wilt

Remember her, thy daughter, fair and  
young,

And come to our relief that she may  
live?

JEPHTHA.

Dear child! My heart has been so  
flooded with

Unusual care, that I'd forgotten her.

*(Yields to grief.)*

My fathers, do not charge me with  
revenge.

My only wish has been to honor God.

Forgive me that I've griev'd you thus.

But you

Know not the suffering my exile cost.

*(Hesitates.)*

I'll go to rescue her, my sweet young  
child.

*(Hazeal steps between them,  
frowning, and speaks.)*

HAZAEI.

My friends, your time is wasted in  
vain words.

All ties between the noble Jephtha and  
Yourselves are broken off by your  
own deeds

Alone. Ye sent him, empty-handed,—  
yea,

And broken-hearted from your walls.  
I took

Him in, and fed and cloth'd and  
cheer'd him in

His lonely time of need. He cannot  
thus

So lightly treat his new found friend,  
for you.

*(Hazael turns toward Jephtha, ex-  
pecting him to speak. Hazael  
continues.)*

Yea more, I brought him here that  
he might reap

Such fame and riches, as he well  
deserves,

From off the land of enemies, and  
think

Ye not that he is lost to honor in  
Such low degree, that he'll abandon  
me,

His trusted friend, to be devour'd  
by those

Wild Canaanites; or what is worse,  
to be  
Betray'd, at last, by those disowning  
him,  
Who thought to end his life by ban-  
ishment.

*(Hazaël turns and appeals to  
Jeptha.)*

Come, Jeptha, speak! ye cannot well  
betray  
Nor leave a friend, to you, so tried  
and true?

JEPTHA.

'Tis true as he has said. When I  
was driv'n  
From home, to beg, and 'lone to roam  
in lands  
Unknown, he shelter'd me, and sav'd  
my life.  
I honor him,—ye must return alone.  
*(Elders prostrate themselves.)*

ELDER.

NAY, NAY, good Jeptha, heed our  
earnest pray'r  
And save thy fatherland, and save thy  
child.  
Do not refuse our plea. Thy country  
calls.  
*(Jeptha meditates, faces Elders.)*

JEPHTHA.

Arise, my lords, I cannot bear the  
sight

Of these old men, of whom, since  
childhood, I

Have thought as gods, upon their  
knees, their robes

Begrin'd in dust, their beards all wet  
with tears,—

Their trembling hands uplift in pray'r  
to me

As god, and asking aid. My heart  
relents.

*(Jeptha stoops to lift them up.)*

Come now, my lords, arise, dishonor  
not

Yourselves to kneel to me. I'll go!  
I'm yours.

Receive me as your son, and I will go  
With you to death to save my native  
land!

*(Elders embrace Jeptha. Turning  
to Hazael Jeptha says.)*

Farewell, Hazael, I cannot longer  
stay.

HAZAEI.

Thou base ingrate, and willing tool,  
Farewell.

JEPHTHA.

Speak not such words, thou son of  
Naphtali.

For known thou art, as bandit now,  
in spite

Of thy disguise. What dost thou  
here, when war

Is wag'd 'gainst Israel? And thou  
the son

Of the great house of Issachar! And  
ye

*(Turning to Hazael's men.)*

The noble youth of chosen seed, I  
beg

You follow me, before it be too late  
To save our fatherland from cruel  
war.

I show an honor'd way in which your  
steps

You may retrace,—retrieve your for-  
tunes gone,

And goodly name, and worthy be to  
join

Your lofty race. We promise you  
high place

In war,—our patronage,—protection  
too.

*(Young men talk excitedly.)*

Yea, come, and let us war no more  
against

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Our God, and Gilead. And thou,  
Haza'l,  
Give up thy bandit life, and join with  
these  
In righteous war, to save God's  
chosen seed.

*(Hazael has gradually changed  
expression, from frowning to  
favor.)*

HAZAEEL.

It seems that God Himself doth  
speak. I've oft  
Deplor'd my hapless life, and felt a  
deep  
Remorse in turning from the law of  
God  
And joining hands with lawless hordes  
to vex  
God's chosen seed. The way seems  
plain. I go  
With these who give their lives to  
save God's own.  
*(One of Hazael's men speaks.)*

SOLDIER.

We join thee, noble sire. We too  
repent.



## ACT THREE

### THE VOW

*(Scene, Mizpah. Chorus Behind Second  
Curtain. Captain and Jephtha's Daughter,  
Elder and Jephtha)  
(Captain Same as Shepherd in First Act)*

#### SCENE FIRST

CAPTAIN.

The gods have turn'd from Gilead.  
The clouds  
Of war have frighten'd all to arms.  
The flocks  
Are left to roam at will. Deserted  
are  
The fields. 'Tis vintage time, but  
none are found  
To press the grapes. To flee, or face  
the foe,  
Has fill'd the minds of all. Impend-  
ing doom  
Has come o'er all the land. Our  
armies too,

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Without a head, will fall an easy  
prey.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

Say not "the gods," kind sir. Jehovah  
reigns  
O'er all. He shall our armies lead.  
Besides  
The elders and my father's kin have  
gone  
To call him home, that he may have  
command  
Against the foe.

CAPTAIN.

Thy father to return!  
Can he forgive, and trust himself to  
those  
Whose envy drove him hence? Were  
he to come,  
'Twould fill all hearts with hope. For  
such display  
Of loyal zeal as his return would  
shame  
Us all to make a living sacrifice.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

My father's heart beats true with  
loyalty  
To God and Gilead. He'll ne'er for-  
sake

His own,—his home,—his God,—his  
child,—his all.

CAPTAIN.

I read the virtues of thine honor'd  
sire  
In noble lines upon thy charming  
face,  
Reflected by a common love for God  
And home and right.  
(*She veils her face.*)

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

Unworthy I of such  
High praise. A simple child of God,  
I would  
His will be done. My father taught  
me so.

CAPTAIN.

From childhood have I nurtur'd  
sacred thoughts  
Of thee, and know of thy true life.  
But not  
Until I met thee with my sheep had I  
The chance to tell thee of my love.  
Dost thou  
Remember when I saw thee first? and  
gave  
Thee token of the same? I would  
increase

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

The meaning many fold,—I love thee  
still.

*(Noise, blowing of trumpets.  
Cheering. Elders, etc., approach  
with Jephtha. Jephtha's Daughter  
turns to the Captain in fear,  
and they go to opposite side of  
stage. The curtain rises on the  
full chorus and they begin to  
sing. As Jephtha approaches his  
daughter runs and throws her  
arms around his neck. They go  
to center of stage.)*

## WELCOME CHORUS

King of Gilead, Hail all Hail,  
Let the loudest shouts prevail.  
Welcome to your native land.  
May your name forever stand  
Proud among the sons of God  
In the land your fathers trod.  
Welcome, Jephtha, welcome.

Foes await your trusted steel,—  
Threaten now your country's weal.  
Prove again your valor brave  
And your land and country save.  
Strike against the rising foe,

Deal a mighty, deadly blow.  
Welcome, Jephtha, welcome.

Honor waits the hero bold  
Keeping us from bondage sold,  
Making all our country free,  
Granting all their liberty.  
God will give you victory,—  
God will set old Gilead free.  
Welcome, Jephtha, welcome.

*(An elder approaches and speaks.)*

ELDER.

All hail our royal chief. Enter the  
tent  
Of captain of our host, and may the  
God  
Of Israel give victory against  
The Ammonites, and save our land.  
All Hail.

*(Jephtha pauses at the tent door.  
Turning toward them, speaks.)*

JEPHTHA.

Ye elders, men of Gilead, I thank  
You for your welcome true. No  
patriot  
Could longer steel his heart against  
your plea.  
Though driven from your midst in  
cruelty,

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

My home-sick heart forgets the past  
and brings  
Me back to serve you in your time  
of need.  
When home and native land in peril  
lie,  
Then wrongs must be o'erlook'd, and  
all must vie  
To show their loyalty. Besides, re-  
venge  
But kills the finer sense of man's true  
self,  
And spoils the image made of God.  
The post  
Of captain o'er your troops you've  
promis'd me.  
But how know I, when I return from  
war,  
That I shall not be treated as be-  
fore?—  
Thrust out and banish'd from my  
home and friends  
Again? Ere I consent to lead in war  
To battle for our cause, ye must  
agree  
To these two things,—that while I  
rule in war  
I must be ruler, too, in peace. If now  
Ye make me judge of Gilead, I'll  
take

Command of all your troops; if not,  
I must  
Return to make my home in alien  
lands.

ELDER.

Such sense of justice do you show that  
we  
Most willingly agree to all that you  
Demand. For all we know of Jep-  
tha's skill  
And his superior pow'r o'er all the  
men  
Of Gilead, we'll gladly make thee  
judge,  
And do our utmost to repair our  
wrong.

JEPHTHA.

Then let an altar be upbuilt that  
will  
Commemorate your vow, that peo-  
ple all  
O'er Gilead may witness our compact,  
And by its silent presence here con-  
firm  
Your pledge, and me, in both these  
offices.

ELDER.

An altar shall be built within the  
midst

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Of Mizpah's gates, memorial of this  
day,  
And there before assembled armies  
drawn  
In dress array, and 'fore the Lord  
our God,  
We will install thee judge and captain  
o'er  
All Gilead,—at home and in the field.

ALL.

We will, amen, so let it be, we will.  
(*Jeptha assumes attitude of  
prayer.*)

JEPHTHA.

The Lord our witness be to this pro-  
found  
And sacred rite according to thy  
words.  
(*Priest steps forward with out-  
stretched hands and prays.*)

PRIEST.

O God, thy blessing now we crave  
upon  
Our chosen Head. Grant wisdom,  
pow'r and skill  
From out thy dwelling-place, that all  
our foes  
May be o'erthrown, and Gilead be  
sav'd.



JEPHTHA.

With God and people on our side we  
shall

Prevail. We'll not await attack, but  
move

At once against the Ammonites.

*(Addressing the young Captain.)*

Command

"Attention," and prepare the ranks  
to meet

Me at the sharp defile,—the gorge  
between

Yon mountain peaks, where now I  
see the spears

And glitt'ring chariots and banners  
of

The enemy. Prepare for march at  
once.

*(Great stir among the soldiers.)*

But first, choose men of rank, am-  
bassadors,

To go and counsel with our foes,—  
learn their

Demands, and what their grievance  
be, for we

Must war as civil men, as God has  
taught.

## SCENE TWO

*(In Ammon's Camp.)**(Ambassadors and King Ammon.)*

AMBASSADORS.

O king, the captain Jephtha, ruler of  
Our land, to thee, the king of Am-  
mon's sons,  
A message sends, and asks why thou  
hast come  
To fight against his land. What evil  
has  
He done?—what inj'ry wrought?  
He will repay  
If still within his pow'r. For he does  
not  
Desire to stain his hands with blood,  
if terms  
Of honor may be nam'd by thee for  
peace.

KING.

Go tell your leader that we come to  
claim  
Those lands that Isra'l took by force  
when out  
Of Egypt's land they came,—without  
due right.

AMBASSADORS.

What lands, my lord O king, would  
you reclaim?

KING.

The richest part of my inheritance  
Was wrested from our kings by  
force,—the tract  
Three rivers bound,—the silv'ry Jab-  
bok and  
Sweet Arnon, and the muddy Jordan  
stream.  
Restore these lands and peaceably  
I'll go.  
If ye refuse, they shall be mine by  
force.

AMBASSADORS.

Thus saith great Jephtha, O thou  
king,—These lands  
Our people did not take from thee,  
but from  
King Sihon,—he who rul'd the Amo-  
rites.  
A passage he denied when Israel  
Came out of Egypt's slavery. The  
king  
Of Edom, and of Moab, too, would  
not  
Allow God's chosen ones to cross  
their land.

We then were forc'd to march  
around, which caus'd  
Us sore delay. And when we  
reach'd the banks  
Of Arnon, when again we would cut  
short  
Our course, again we were denied.  
They sent  
Their armies out to drive us hence.  
We gave  
Them fight, determin'd in our course,  
and God  
Was pleas'd to give to Isra'l owner-  
ship.

KING.

I do not recognize your claims on  
such  
A plea, and will at once resort to  
arms.

AMBASSADORS.

Wouldst thou then take from us the  
land receiv'd  
From God as spoils of war? Take  
what thy god,  
Chemosh, hath given thee. The for-  
mer king,  
Zippor, did never try to gain these  
lands.

Three hundred years God's people,  
 Israel,  
 Possession held, and ye do wrong to  
 claim  
 Them now, and force your claim by  
 war. The Lord  
 Jehovah judge between thy claims  
 and ours.

KING.

Then let your God go forth to war,  
 for I  
 Refuse to yield your claim. The right  
 shall win.

SCENE THREE

*(In Mizpah. Ambassadors and Jephtha and  
 Captain)*

AMBASSADORS.

My lord, we did as thou didst say.  
 The king  
 Of Ammon will not yield, and we  
 must turn  
 To war that God, our Guide, may  
 prove our cause.

JEPHTHA.

Command the chariots to make haste,  
 and all  
 The camels, horse and elephants  
 bring forth.

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

We'll swallow up the ground with  
fiercest rage,  
And with the quiver, spear and sword  
assail  
With all our might, and lay proud  
Ammon low.

*(Great stir among the soldiers.  
Jephtha turns aside to pray.)*

Jehovah, God, if Thou wilt give us  
help,  
And victory, this solemn vow I'll  
make,—  
Whate'er shall first come forth to  
meet us, from  
My house, when we return, I'll give  
to Thee  
In holy sacrifice,—my offering.

*(The soldiers are in line. Bow  
for pray'r.)*

PRIEST.

Thou God of battles, hear our cry.  
To war  
Our armies go. Attend them all in  
camp  
And field, and may the right prevail,  
that Thou  
May'st have a name in Israel, thine  
own

## ACT THREE

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Peculiar race, that all the world may  
know  
That Thou alone art God, our great  
High Priest.

*(Curtain)*

## ACT FOUR

### THE SACRIFICE

*(Jeptha Returns from Victory. The Chorus Welcomes)*

*Characters: Jeptha, Jeptha's Daughter,  
Elders, Captain*

Hail to our victor, Jeptha,  
With blood and splendor crown'd  
Returning from the battle,  
Let praise to thee resound.  
Blow loud the clarion trumpet,  
Behold our loyal chief.  
He lifts his crest in triumph,  
And breathes a sweet relief.

Hail to our victor, Jeptha,  
Who trod old Ammon down.  
Swing wide the gates of Mizpah,  
Proclaim his glad renown.  
Lead on thy conquering armies  
Who trod the field of blood,



And let them share our welcome,  
Sav'd from the battle's flood.

Hail to our victor, Jephtha.  
Our altars now we'll build  
To God, the great Jehovah,  
His temples will be fill'd.  
We'll break our heathen idols,  
And his dear name restore,  
For he hath crown'd our armies.  
We'll praise him evermore.

Amen.

*(During the singing the company looks tow'rd Jephtha and the soldiers. Jephtha's daughter leads as they advance. The Captain is in the lead of the procession. As he approaches he recognizes her and bows, and she returns the salute. On coming to a stop he draws near her side, and taking her hand kisses it. They have a few words whisper'd conversation, when an elder breaks the silence.)*

*It must also be manifest that Jephtha has seen and recogniz'd his daughter.*

*During the singing of this song*

*there is splendid opportunity to introduce fancy drills, which may be prolonged as a part of Jephtha's welcome.)*

ELDER.

Hail, citizens of Gilead! Behold  
Our hero comes, the victor over all  
Our enemies, and Gilead is sav'd!!!

*(Jephtha hangs his head.)*

Behold him in his car of gold, and by  
His side his steel clad warriors. His  
robe

Of blue, embroider'd rich with gold,  
and bound

By girdle broad of golden mail. His  
sword

Is hung by silver chains, and on his  
feet

Are shoes of brass. A scarlet man-  
tle from

His shoulders falls, and 'round his  
head a band

Of steel, adorn'd by golden horn, All  
hail.

*(Jephtha seems sad.)*

JEPHTHA.

I'm dazed by all this welcome giv'n.  
'Tis God

Who gave us victory. To Him our  
praise

Belongs. Our enemies are over-  
thrown.

*(Bows in sadness.)*

*(His daughter and the Captain ap-  
proach.)*

But now my heart is bow'd with grief,  
for I

Did vow, in victory, I'd give to God  
In sacrifice, the first that came forth  
from

My door. And as I saw this youth-  
ful train,

My daughter led them all,—my only  
child.

*(Covers head with grief. Uncov-  
ers and speaks. His daughter  
draws a little nearer. The Cap-  
tain accompanies.)*

O God, My Lord, Thou know'st my  
vow. Was it

Thy will that caused my daughter first  
to come?—

To greet my safe return? She was  
the first

I saw, and hence must be my sacrifice.

*(He bows his head. His daugh-  
ter goes to him. He lifts his  
head and speaks, as she slowly  
approaches.)*

Behold my child, who holds the tim-  
brel high  
O'erhead,—attir'd in robe of divers  
hues,  
In feather-work, and silk of many  
dyes,—  
A wreath of roses 'round her head,  
her feet  
In scarlet sandals shod, and face  
aglow  
With smiles in honor of my victory.  
Poor child, she knows not of her  
pending doom.

*(He yields to grief. She does not  
understand and tries to comfort  
him.)*

DAUGHTER.

My father! Gladly do I welcome  
thee.

What honors thou hast won!! May  
God be prais'd!

JEPHTHA.

Alas, my daughter, dear, how little  
dost

Thou know the sadness of this hour,  
—alas.

DAUGHTER.

Dear father, why dost thou so grieve?  
Behold

The daughters fair of Gilead, all clad

In white, with chaplet wreaths, and  
silver bells  
Upon their ankles, who in mazy whirl  
Of joy surround you here, to render  
you  
Due praise for honors won on battle-  
field,  
By which our country now is free and  
sav'd.

CAPTAIN.

Most valiant judge, the vict'ry of  
this hour  
Enrolls you 'mong the great of earth.  
Rejoice.

JEPHTHA.

Thou meanest well, kind sir, but  
knowest not.  
My daughter, dear, has brought me  
low, e'en to  
The dust of ashes.—God forgive,—  
My child,  
Forgive. I cannot bear the thought.  
Would God  
I had not made the vow to sacrifice.

DAUGHTER.

What vow, O father, didst thou  
make to turn  
This hour of great rejoicing into  
gloom?

JEPHTHA.

'Tis true our land is free, but, oh,  
at what  
A priceless cost! May God now give  
me strength.

DAUGHTER.

Unburden all your heart. You've  
sav'd our land.  
The people all will come to your re-  
lief.

CAPTAIN.

All Gilead is at your feet, and waits  
Command for aught thy heart de-  
sires. But speak.

JEPHTHA.

My heart, already fill'd with grati-  
tude,  
Could ask no more. The people have  
repaid.  
No help can come. I'm born to sor-  
row's lot.  
From childhood until now I've borne  
a load  
Of grief. But only now my fainting  
soul  
Has fail'd to serve my need. O  
God! my grief!

DAUGHTER.

But speak, dear father, and thy word  
shall be

As law to all thy countrymen,—and  
me.

JEPHTHA.

The words would choke my speech,  
and none can help.

DAUGHTER.

Our lives are in thy hands, we'll suc-  
cor thee!

JEPHTHA.

Your words fulfil my vow's demand,  
dear child.

*(Jeptha weeps silently.)*

Thy heart, so brave, relieves the load  
I feel

In telling thee the cause of my com-  
plaint.

*(Jeptha again weeps.)*

Before I went to war, I made a vow  
To God, that if He gave me victory  
I'd sacrifice the first that came to  
greet

Me from my door, and thou, dear  
child, wert first.

*(Jeptha yields to grief.)*

DAUGHTER.

My father, dear, if thou hast spoken  
to

Thy God in solemn vow, do unto me  
As thou didst pledge.

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

*(She puts much feeling into her speech.)*

Our God hath done His part,  
And made thee conqueror o'er all thy  
foes,  
And set our country free. The Am-  
monites  
Have fallen by thy sword, and if our  
God  
Hath chosen me the price of vic-  
tory,  
His will be done.

*(With much emotion.)*

I freely yield my life.  
In such a death there is no bitter-  
ness.

*(Jephtha almost collapses. Elders  
rush to support him. They help  
him from his car. He throws  
himself on the floor in grief.  
His daughter goes to speak to  
him. Then she speaks.)*

Dear father, rise, be comforted. We  
have  
But one lone life to live. Those live  
it best  
Who give the most to God. He gave  
us all,  
And soon, at best, we all must yield  
to death.



What matters whether few or more  
the days  
We spend in weary pilgrimage? Our  
lives  
Are measur'd, not by years, but by  
our deeds.  
And if my life must be the price of  
peace  
And happiness for Gilead, I count  
It honor far beyond desert to yield.  
*(She falls on the floor beside her  
father.  
Elders have been whispering ex-  
citedly.)*

ELDER NO. I.

What measure best to be pursu'd in  
this  
So sad emergency? This sorrow  
palls  
Our hearts, and robs our victory of  
all  
Its joy. For Jephtha now to offer up  
His precious child to God in sacrifice,  
Is worthy only of idolatry.  
Our God does not require such rec-  
ompense.  
It is a crime, detestable to us,  
IMPOSSIBLE. We must not yield to  
rites

Of heathen origin. We must protest.

ELDER NO. 2.

And yet he made a solemn vow to  
God,  
And this may be the silent cause of  
his  
Great victory. How can he now re-  
fuse  
To do his part? What evils might  
not God  
Inflict on him and us, if he refuse?

ELDER NO. 1.

We find ourselves in deep perplexity.  
No time before in all our history  
Has Gilead been rous'd to such a  
pitch  
Of joy. So many years have we been  
sack'd  
And pillag'd by our enemies, that  
now,  
Since Jephtha has deliver'd us, o'er all  
Our land the people now are wild  
with glee.  
We dare not plunge them into grief  
so soon.  
Besides, brave Jephtha should not suf-  
fer thus.  
He's mingled with strange gods. His  
vow can have

No place in Moses' law. Nor should  
his child  
Be slaughter'd like a lamb in innocence.

ELDER No. 3.

Then let us take our case before the  
priests  
Of Shiloh, at the tabernacles' shrine,  
And seek advice from those who  
know the law,—  
The import of a vow,—who will reply.

ELDER No. 1.

To this let all agree, and send at once  
A council of our own to make our  
plea.

*(While the elders get ready to go  
the chorus sings. The Captain  
and Jephtha's daughter whisper.)*

O daughter fair of Gilead  
Thy sisters weep for thee.  
Our nation mourns thy sore distress  
And pleads to God for help.

O elders press your solemn plea  
Upon the holy priests,  
That they may learn from God a way  
To overcome our grief.

We trust in God, who by His will  
May give us some relief,  
That Jephtha and his daughter too  
May live to share our peace.

(*Curtain.*)

SCENE TWO.

*Characters: Elders, Priest, Captain, Jephtha,  
Jephtha's daughter, Virgins, Chorus.*

(*Elders return.  
All on platform as before.  
Messengers rush on stage with  
message from the priests.*)

ELDER NO. I.

O Jephtha, hear the answer of the  
great  
High priest of Israel. Our messen-  
gers

Have come with gladsome news for  
you and all.

Thy daughter lives!

(*Applause which elder restrains.*)

Thy vow was made unlike  
A worshipper of the true God. For  
such

A vow does He abominate. Our law  
Forbids her death.

*(Another attempt to applaud.)*

She may be purchased for  
A price. Ten shekels do the priests  
demand.

This sum, and more, we're ready to  
allow.

*(About to rejoice when another  
messenger rushes on the stage,  
speaking.)*

PRIEST'S MESSENGER.

In greatest haste I come from our  
High Priest.

He says that he has found another  
law,

In which, 'tis said, "That which is  
giv'n to God

In solemn vow, remains forever His."

*(All manifest great interest.)*

So Jephtha's child to Shiloh must be  
sent

To serve within the holy place  
through all

Her life, preserving her virginity.

Shut in from all the world, no more  
to man

Does she belong. She's holy to the  
Lord.

*(Some would applaud. The Captain weeps. The father still is sad.)*

JEPHTHA.

My countrymen, you seem to be relieved

By this decree. To me, my daughter's lost

As if by death, forever lost. And worse,

She's doom'd to serve in loneliness, and be

Depriv'd of ev'ry Jewish woman's hope

Of being mother of Messiah, King.

The comfort of my waning years is gone.

CAPTAIN.

Alas that her fair life must thus be doom'd.

JEPHTHA.

Yea, she, my precious child, had wrought upon

Her soul, by consecration all sincere,  
And deepest love for me, to give her life

A sacrifice to God, for peace to home  
And native land, in honor of my vow,

For heav'n's reward,—a crown of  
light and life.

(*Mourns.*)

But now her lonely life, secluded from  
The world, will bring to her young  
heart a chill

As from the tomb. 'Twill be a living  
death.

DAUGHTER.

Dear father, cheer thee now, I'm  
sav'd from death.

My life, devoted to our God, and for  
My country's sake, must be a happy  
one.

For God will not excessively afflict  
His child with self-denial so extreme.  
And for your own dear sake, I freely  
yield.

JEPHTHA.

My child, what noble spirit fills thy  
breast!

DAUGHTER.

In doing this, I do no more than you  
And all my countrymen have done,  
who took

Their lives in hand, and went forth  
into war.

Record my name with those who died  
upon

The field, and value more your liberty.

*(Jephtha embraces her. Then she turns from him.)*

CAPTAIN.

My life has been preserv'd in war,  
but now

I give the greater price,—my heart's  
true love.

DAUGHTER.

The love we owe our God surpasses  
all.

CAPTAIN.

'Tis true, but human love does not  
conflict

With love divine. The holy order of  
God's laws provides for both. His  
will be done.

DAUGHTER.

Yea, noble captain, oft the times I'll  
think

Of thee. What yet may be, God only  
knows.

JEPHTHA.

Would God that He would give me  
back my child.

DAUGHTER.

Dear father, do not give thyself to  
grief.

Remember, thou hast many duties to



Perform, and honors high will crown  
thy life.  
And thou hast learn'd TO WORSHIP  
GOD! the true  
JEHOVAH, who did save His chosen  
seed,  
That from their loins, Messiah, King,  
should come—  
Redeemer of the world from all its  
sin.

JEPHTHA.

These greater gifts do not obscure  
my loss.

DAUGHTER.

Thou would'st have given me a sac-  
rifice  
As Balak, who did plan to burn his  
son,—  
Revolting off'ring,—to his heathen  
god  
Chemosh. By superstition thou wert  
bound,  
And thought a slave might greet thy  
glad return.  
But in my childish glee, so proud was  
I  
To see such glory come to thee, I was  
The first to welcome thee.  
And thus did God

Reprove, and teach thee of thy  
wrong. And now  
I live, and more, for thou hast  
learn'd to know  
The true and mighty God of Israel.

JEPHTHA.

No lesson ever learn'd at dearer  
price.

DAUGHTER.

But thou art judge of Gilead! The  
cause  
Of Israel hath greatly wan'd, and  
thou  
Art in a place to save our heritage.  
Unless thou dost, then God must  
raise instead  
Some Samson, strong, or else our  
cause is lost.  
The enemies without are overcome,  
The enemies within must be subdu'd,  
That Gilead may take her rightful  
place.

JEPHTHA.

The sorrow of my heart destroys my  
pride  
And lays ambition low. My spirit  
fails.  
I've wrought on battle-field and  
gain'd the day,

But to return to die with broken heart.

DAUGHTER.

A glory all thine own now crowns thy  
brow,  
Won on the gory battle-field, and  
now  
In peace still greater honor soon will  
come  
To thee. Thou wilt at last forget the  
pain  
And anguish of this hour. Thy  
soul wilt find  
Sweet joy in serving God and na-  
tive land.  
Thy name wilt stand among the hon-  
or'd ones  
Of Israel in IMMORTALITY.

*(Jephtha draws his daughter close  
to him in grief.)*

JEPHTHA.

Dear child, how can I part with thee?  
Thy life  
Grows dearer, since redeem'd by  
priest's decree.  
Thy filial love, and faith sublime,  
twice shown  
In acts of such heroic grace, hath  
bound

Thy heart unto my inmost soul with  
bonds  
Ten thousand fold increas'd. And  
now when freed  
From death, thou go'st to life imprison-  
ment!

CAPTAIN.

Thou are a miracle of grace, and  
faith,  
And love, divine,—and sweet sim-  
plicity.  
My heart bleeds sore for loss of  
thee, and yet  
I bow before thy brave resolve in  
deep  
Humility. *Thy sacrifice dost shame  
Us all.* My love for thee shall fill  
my heart  
Until it beats no more. Dear heart,  
farewell.

DAUGHTER.

Thy words have touch'd my heart. I  
counted well  
The cost in offering my sacrifice.  
(*She turns to the elders.*)  
Respected elders, humbly do I bow  
To our high priest's decree. It is a  
just  
And righteous law. I yield me to  
His will

And, yielding, do the greater service  
to

My God.

But one request I make before  
I go,—that I may have some little  
time

For preparation,—taking leave of  
friends

And scenes so dear,—and to bewail  
my lot

As virgin evermore; for thus I've lost  
All hope of being in the fam'ly tree  
That traces our Messiah's lineage.

ELDER NO. I.

Brave child, thou speakest as in-  
spir'd of God.

We'll soothe the sadness of thy fa-  
ther's heart.

And these young friends will go with  
thee upon

Thy pilgrimage of sad adieu, to bid  
Farewell to friends and all that's  
dear to thee.

*(Virgin leads her about the stage.)*

VIRGIN.

Dear friend, we feel the sadness of  
thy lot,

And offer thee good cheer. Remem-  
ber us,

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

And all these scenes of early youth,  
 and we'll  
 Remember thee. These mountains,  
 vales, and streams  
 Like silver threads, you'll oft recall,  
 for all  
 Their loveliness, when hous'd in your  
 retreat.

And on this day each year, we'll celebrate.

*(Virgin leads her to her father.)*

Most honor'd judge, thy daughter we  
 return

That she may bid thee, last of all,  
 farewell.

JEPHTHA.

My child, I feign would match thy  
 bravery,

Complying with the priest's decree.

*(Solemn and strong, he speaks.)*

And now

To thee, the fathers of our land, I  
 yield

My child.

Within her veins, the noblest blood  
 Of Israel runs red with deepest love  
 For father, God, and native land.

Before

Her final act, I bow, as being more  
 Than all the bloody heroism of war.

To her I owe the honors I have won.  
For her sweet life is made the costly  
price  
By which I gain'd them all. My  
only child,  
Farewell, farewell, farewell. May  
God keep thee  
Beneath the shadow of His wing, and  
in  
The hollow of His hand. Farewell,  
farewell.

*(Elders lead her to the center of stage, chorus gathers about her, and sings following words adapted from an author unknown.)*

Maid of Gilead, fare thee well.  
Hear our mournful chorus swell.  
While among the valleys lone  
We for thee will truly mourn.  
Breezes of her natal sky  
Waft to her our pitying cry.  
Farewell, Jephtha's daughter.

No mother watches o'er thy bed.  
No father blesses thy young head,  
Guarding thee, no brothers stand  
Nor gentle smiling sister band.

Never may thou as a bride  
Grace a happy lover's side.  
Farewell, Jephtha's daughter.

Lonely virgin, not for thee  
A parent's sweet anxiety,  
No olive buds around thee twine,  
No voices singing infant chime,  
And that bright hope is lost to thee,  
Head of Messiah's line to be.  
Farewell, Jephtha's daughter.

Maid of Gilead, fare thee well.  
Yearly shall this shady dell,  
Mountain path and verdant plain  
Echo our lamenting strain.  
May our mournful chorus swelling,  
Reach thee in thy lonely dwelling.  
Farewell, Jephtha's daughter.

ANON.



## NOTE BY AUTHOR

In sending Jephtha's daughter to Shiloh we have been influenced by those who have thought that the sacrifice proposed by Jephtha was a rash act, and not in keeping with the teaching of the Scriptures. Jephtha may have meant it literally without taking into consideration the possible consequences. Hence his great grief and surprise when his own and only daughter became the subject of this sacrifice. Jephtha might not have thought that it might be any human being, much less his daughter.

God may have permitted Jephtha's daughter to have been the first object seen in order to teach him the true nature of a sacred vow, and how far his own mind had been influenced by his associations with heathen peoples.

We have given this subject much study and find that the Talmudic scholars themselves have been about evenly divided as to the fate of Jephtha's daughter.

Sending her to Shiloh was a sacrifice within the legitimate meaning of the Scriptures

which do not confine the word to a literal meaning.

Act Five is therefore an enlargement upon this idea and as we think a legitimate inference.

The play might stop with the fourth act. But some of our critics have thought the reader or, if played, the audience should not be left carrying the sad thought of her life-long imprisonment.

We have no disposition whatever to question the statement of the Scripture but simply to interpret it in the larger light of the Scriptures themselves.

## ACT FIVE

### THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

*Characters: Ephraimite, Jephtha, Elders,  
Captain, Messengers, Chorus*

*(Jephtha on Stage Alone. An Ephraimite  
Comes Along)*

JEPHTHA.

How sad the years, with all their  
weight of care.

And, over all, the thought of my dear  
child

Has rent my heart in twain. Had  
she but died

The grief would not have been so  
sore. For she

Must grieve for father, home, and  
friends. For though

Resign'd to fate and service so sub-  
lime,

Her heart, so young and full of  
youth's delights,

Must sink below the grave. O God,  
relieve!

*(Aroused from grief by Ephraimite)*

EPHRAIMITE.

I come to ask why thou didst go  
against  
The Ammonites alone, and call'd not  
us?

JEPHTHA.

The strife with Ammon was severe  
and when  
We call'd, ye did refuse, and held  
aloof.

EPHRAIMITE.

Our share of victory do we demand,  
Since we increas'd the number of thy  
troops.

JEPHTHA.

But ye refused, and when we took our  
lives  
In hand against strong Ammon, God  
did give  
Him o'er to us,—thou seekest cause  
for war.

EPHRAIMITE.

Ye Gileadites are fugitives from out  
Of Ephraim, and we'll compel our  
claim.

JEPHTHA.

Thy brethren went to Gideon once  
with such  
A claim as this, and he by words of  
smooth  
Conceit didst compromise. But I re-  
fuse.

EPHRAIMITE.

We'll burn thy house above thy head  
and take  
Our spite against thy selfish victory.

JEPHTHA.

I see no hope of peace in compro-  
mise,  
And will not yield to purposes so  
base.  
If that low breed of Ephraimites  
would fight,  
I'll call all Gilead to arms, and slay  
Them root and branch. I will no  
more of thee.

EPHRAIMITE.

I'll devastate thy lands and swallow  
up  
All Israel, and make thy people  
slaves.

*(Elders approach, inquiring about  
the conversation. Ephraimite  
withdraws.)*

ELDER.

What evil brings this Ephraimite to  
vex  
Thy noble soul to such degree of  
rage?

JEPHTHA.

He'd share the spoils of victory, when  
not  
A man of all their treach'rous tribe  
would come  
To our relief against unequal foes.

ELDER.

He seeks a quar'l, and would assail  
our land  
So weaken'd now by long and con-  
stant war.

JEPHTHA.

I'll go against this heathen dog with  
all  
The force of Gilead, and rid our land  
And Israel of this historic foe.

ELDER.

The cause is just, as God would own,  
for they  
Would raze the altars built to wor-  
ship Him,  
And set up graven images of false  
And heathen gods,—of silver and of  
gold.

JEPHTHA.

They threaten to usurp the land God  
gave  
All Israel, and turn it o'er to hands  
Unclean with heathen sacrifice, and  
rob  
Us of our heritage.

ELDER.

The Philistines  
Are on all sides, awaiting some at-  
tack,  
And "Ephraim has join'd his idols  
too."  
Our holy cause is in such jeopardy  
That some strong arm must strike at  
once, or God  
Our Lord will have no name in all  
the earth.

JEPHTHA.

Go, call the captain of our hosts, I'll  
give  
Command of such degree against this  
tribe  
Of fugitives that they will vex no  
more.  
*(Elder gets captain and brings  
him.)*

CAPTAIN.

Am at your service, sir, and wait com-  
mand.

JEPHTHA.

I would that thou should'st call thy  
men of war  
And rid our land of this insult from  
these  
Vile Ephraimites, who worship not  
our God,  
But make them other gods to take  
the place  
Of that true worship taught good  
Moses in  
The mount. They brib'd a vagrant  
Levite priest  
To serve at their unholy shrine, to  
give  
The truer semblance to our forms  
divine.

CAPTAIN.

The cause is just. We must preserve  
the fruits  
Of victory to save the name of God.

JEPHTHA.

Our altars crumble everywhere, and  
we  
Must strike a deadly blow to save  
our cause.

CAPTAIN.

Since they have been with us in camp,  
how shall



We tell them from our own?—else  
we shall fail?

JEPHTHA.

Command the Jordan passages, and  
those  
Who come and ask to cross, demand  
of them  
The pass-word, "Shibboleth," and  
those who lisp  
And answer "Sibboleth," thou'lt  
slay them on  
The spot, for they are traitor Ephra-  
imites.

CAPTAIN.

Wise Judge, adieu; I'll follow thy  
command.

*(Captain exits. Several elders  
enter.)*

ELDER I.

Good Judge, well done, for these vile  
hordes would lord  
It o'er God's heritage, and claim the  
right.  
For father Jacob gave his doted son  
The greater blessing, whom they  
boast as head  
Of all their tribes, and think them-  
selves above  
The common Gileadites whom they  
despise.

ELDER 2.

And now, O judge, since thou dost  
    stay to guide  
The destinies of Gilead, I would  
Advise, and speak of our distress.  
    Our wars  
Have laid us low. The land has  
    fail'd to yield  
Its fruits for seven years, and those  
    who gave  
Relief oppress their debtors sore, and  
    make  
Them slaves. All o'er the land they  
    cry as in  
Old Egypt's time for God's deliver-  
    ance.

ELDER 1.

Yea, Jephtha, thou exalted judge, 'tis  
    true.  
The years of famine so extreme, and  
    war,  
Itself a pestilence, have wrought a  
    state  
Of lawlessness, and ev'ry man but  
    seeks  
His own, without regard to neighbor  
    or  
To God. For eighty silver shekels  
    has

Been sold an ass's head, and all de-  
cry  
Their sins, and groan in penitence,  
and lift  
Their voice to God in prayer,—“O  
Lord, how long?”

JEPHTHA.

These things have vex'd my soul for  
many days.  
E'er since I've been your judge, espe-  
cially  
Since God has crown'd our arms with  
victory,  
I've sought from Him the wisdom He  
would give.  
But since conditions are so general,  
Involving national concern, I've  
thought  
To send to Shiloh to consult the good  
High priest, who knows the laws of  
God, and who  
Can better intercede in our behalf.  
For we will need authority to force  
The needed change. We need the  
help of God.

ELDER 2.

But Shiloh is in Ephraim. 'Twill  
not  
Be safe to venture there until a truce

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

Is made, or better still, till peace is  
made,  
Through our success in arms, for  
Ephraim  
Will not allow our passage through  
his land.

JEPHTHA.

No news from our campaign against  
those base  
And envious Ephraimites? But list,  
what noise?

*(Noise of shouts and rejoicing.  
Enter the captain.)*

CAPTAIN.

Most noble judge, and honor'd el-  
ders, Hail.  
Our victory's complete, and Ephraim  
Will vex no more. The forty-two  
who mock'd  
Elisha were destroy'd by bears, and  
out  
Of Ahab's house were forty-two that  
came  
To death, and thousands forty-two of  
those  
Bold Ephraimites were slain, and  
now our land  
Can rest in peace, and strengthen all  
her bounds.

ELDER I.

The God of Abraham be prais'd, for  
He  
Has favor'd us and come to our re-  
lief.

JEPHTHA.

And now our messengers may safely  
go.

Choose elders who may best present  
our plea.

*(Trumpeters rush on stage, blowing their trumpets to the four points of the compass. Following is the chorus which sings.)*

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

(Tune, "Lenox.")

Blow ye the trumpet, blow,  
The gladly solemn sound,  
Let all the nations know  
To earth's remotest bound

*Chorus.*

The year of Jubilee has come,  
Return ye ransom'd captives home.

The joyous trumpet hear,—  
The news of God's free grace.

Ye happy souls draw near,  
Behold His smiling face.

*Chorus.*

The year of Jubilee has come,  
Return ye ransom'd captives home.

For He our great high Priest  
Has full redemption made.

Ye weary spirits rest:—

Ye mournful souls be glad!

*Chorus.*

The year of Jubilee has come,  
Return ye ransom'd sinners home.  
Amen.

*(All remain on stage until end.)*

ELDER I.

How great and righteous is our God,  
who made  
This law to save His chosen seed  
from dire  
Oppression, and to give new chance  
to all!

JEPHTHA.

A mighty providence doth rule us all.  
Just now, when hope is gone, and all  
our land  
Is plung'd to lowest depths of grim  
despair,

In fear of revolution's torch and  
blood,  
The year of Jubilee has come to free  
All from their galling chains, and  
give new life  
Again,—another chance to win in  
life's  
Hard struggle for success, and drive  
the wolves  
Of want from ev'ry door, and break  
the bonds  
So long impos'd by heartless credi-  
tors.

ELDER 2.

Yea, righteous judge, the captives too  
are free  
And have their liberty,—to win their  
mead  
Of life's reward. From hill and dale  
the shouts  
Resound.

JEPHTHA.

Our God is good and  
watches o'er  
His own. That we may know the  
full import  
Of this great day, let messengers be  
sent  
At once to Shiloh's shrine to learn  
how far

The laws of this glad Jubilee apply.  
(*Messengers rush on the stage, bearing word from the High Priest at Shiloh.*)

MESSENGERS.

All hail! Our good High Priest has  
sent me to  
Proclaim the time, acceptable to God,  
At hand!! Relief has come to all  
our land,  
And bleeding Gilead may now re-  
joice.  
The year of jubilee has come, Re-  
joice!

JEPHTHA.

How reads the law, and how may  
this affect  
Our land, so scourged by pestilence  
of war?

MESSENGERS.

The trumpet blast is heard through-  
out the whole  
Of Palestine, and everywhere the  
poor  
And lowly do rejoice. How great  
our God!

JEPHTHA.

What special terms are given in this  
law?



MESSENGERS.

The land must rest, and beasts of  
burden too.

No one may hold a slave, nor force  
a bond

Upon his fellowman, for God has  
said,—

“All these, my servants, shall be  
free,” for it

Is not a part of any plan that God  
Has made, to see the poor oppress’d.

All debts

And obligations are forgiv’n, that  
joy

May reign in ev’ry heart, in peni-  
tence.

JEPHTHA.

But what about the vows we make to  
God

By which we bind ourselves to spe-  
cial deed,—

For special favor giv’n? Shall they  
be freed?

MESSENGERS.

Our love to God and fellowman are  
on

A common scale, and God would  
teach us all

100 JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

By His example how to love our  
own,  
And do for us what we should do  
for them.

JEPHTHA.

What more detail is given of this  
law?

MESSENGER 2.

All vows and oaths, and obligations,  
and  
Anathemas, which we may vow or  
pledge,  
Or swear, to which we're bound—in  
Jubilee  
May be repented of, and deem'd ab-  
solv'd,  
Forgiv'n, annull'd, and void,—of no  
effect.  
The Aramaic pray'r, "Kol Nidre,"  
tells  
Us this,—that God absolves *His*  
debtors too!

JEPHTHA.

Religious laws, 'twould seem, all laws  
annul!

MESSENGER 1.

The spirit of this day is meant to  
give

Us all a fuller view of God's good  
grace.

This day is emblematical of God's  
Great love for all mankind through-  
out the world.

JEPHTHA.

Kind messenger, when I went forth  
to war

I promis'd God a sacrifice if He  
Would give me victory. My vow He  
heard

And chose my only child, who yielded  
all,

And willingly did give herself to  
serve

Him in the holy place at Shiloh's  
shrine.

What word of comfort can you give  
for her?

O, would that from her living death  
she might

Be free, and cheer my sadly burden'd  
heart.

MESSENGER I.

The value of a vow does not consist  
Alone in cost of offering, but in  
The secret meaning giv'n by him who  
vows.

## JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

No one may bind another by his  
vow,—

As though a slave,—She, too, must  
be set free.

*(Jeptha assumes an attitude of  
prayer.)*

JEPHTHA.

O God of Jacob, by whose love di-  
vine

Thy children's wants are met,—one  
pray'r my heart

Would plead,—that I may see my  
child set free!

*(A messenger rushes on the stage,  
with Jeptha's daughter, shout-  
ing.)*

MESSENGER 3.

The year of Jubilee has come and  
God

Has set His servants free. The  
daughter of

Our Judge is free, and cometh with  
the Priest!!!

*(Priest leads her to her father.  
The Captain also welcomes her.  
The chorus sings.)*

Hail, hail, to Jeptha's daughter, hail,

Lone seed of his proud race,

To bear through peace and battle's wail

His blood in form and face.

Thou once wast dead, but livest now,—  
Wast lost, but now art found,—  
The grace our God will sure bestow  
On all His captives bound.

The vict'ry of thy father, dear,  
Is now made doubly sweet  
While on this day we gather here  
His daughter, free, to greet.

So in the coming harvest times,  
And in the vintage days,  
We'll ring the bells of Mizpah's chimes  
In everlasting praise.

Amen.

*(As the curtain falls the Captain  
leads Jephtha's daughter off the  
stage on his arm.)*





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